

Writing Projects for Students

By Lloyd Lim (dated November 9, 2017)

In addition to the standard writing projects for students such as keeping a journal, doing a book report, identifying the elements of a story, a secondary source research paper or fiction and poetry, there are a variety of projects that can prepare the student for the business world as well as giving them a chance to stretch their minds by writing for different purposes and audiences. When doing revisions, Strunk and White's rule no. 17 is paramount: "omit needless words." Or as Calvin Coolidge said: "And be brief. Above all things, be brief."

1. Identify a political issue, take a position on it and defend that position.
2. Write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper in 200 words or less.
3. Pick a country, identify the major elements of the economy and recommend changes to improve GDP.
4. Write a request to the CEO of company XYZ for authorization to spend money for something (e.g. a new computer software system, new desks and chairs).
5. Pick a stock investment and write a recommendation to the CFO of company XYZ with a justification as to why they should buy that stock.
6. Write a "Dear John" letter terminating a vendor or an employee.
7. Pick a product and write a marketing "blurb" to sell it.
8. Write a description of your school for a report to the government or to a prospective buyer.
9. Write a grant proposal/request.
10. Pick an area of behavioral concern and write a statute/rule/law to control it.
11. Write legislative testimony supporting or opposing a legislative proposal ("bill") of 1-2 pages.
12. Write an agreement/contract to mow someone's lawn (or other simple business arrangement) and try to limit/reduce your ancillary risks.
13. Write a website page.
14. Write a speech (e.g. graduation, wedding, troop deployment, awards ceremony, announcement of political campaign, inauguration).
15. Write a closing argument for a law case ("summation").

Obviously, not all of these projects are appropriate for every age group and some students will require the teacher to lay more of a foundation than others. This can be an opportunity to introduce interesting information about how things work in our society. Consider the appropriateness of individual work, group work and a mixture of both. For example, legislative drafting is ultimately a collaborative effort, so at some point one must move from individual drafting to a group discussion about drafting.